

Paul Sorey's Coffee Pot Pergola

August 6, 2005

Artist Paul Sorey worked with SDOT's landscape architect and other members of the design team to create a unique gathering space as a focal point for the community. At the heart of the site will be a stylized stainless steel coffee/tea pot. The sculpture is a pergola with curved forms at the base providing a place for people to lean or sit while enjoying a beverage, or talking with a friend.



The artwork blends together several themes suggested by North District Council Planning and Stewardship Committee's community surveys. Celebrating the community's diversity of cultures and reflecting "that Home Town feeling", the coffee or tea pot theme recognizes the ritual of drinking these beverages as a universally popular social activity that brings people together. Overlaying this theme, the nature-based curving and branching forms are reminiscent of plants, flowing water and streams referring to the natural beauty of the area and the community's goal to restore the vitality of the several tributaries of Thornton Creek which cut deep ravines through the area. Finally, the curved and branching stainless steel forms also evoke the curves of fins and fenders of cars of the past, appropriate to Lake City.

In April, elementary school students, parents, business owners, and students who are learning English as their second language, created handwritten messages in more than ten languages saying "Let's have coffee" and "Let's have tea." These messages will be reproduced in stainless steel and interspersed within the flagstone pavers under the sculpture base and in the flagstone benches.

The artwork is funded by SDOT's 1% for Art Funds administered by the Mayor's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs. Special thanks are extended to Frontier Bank for a donation used to purchase a

light to illuminate the glass ball on top of the sculpture; the Greater Lake City Community Council for a donation to help fund the stainless steel foreign languages saying "Let's have Coffee" beneath the sculpture; Cheryl Klinker for her tireless work to involve the community in this project; and the volunteers for their assistance in polishing the sculpture before the installation.

Paul Sorey, Artist

Paul Sorey has been constructing and inventing three dimensional artworks since the age of ten. He combines his passion for science and technology with a poetic vision to create artworks that confound and delight viewers while inviting their participation.

Sorey's favorite way of working is to be inspired by a place or space. His fifteen years of experience as a landscape architect enable him to create poetic works while elegantly solving complex issues of integrating an artwork into a site.

Not all artists who create public artworks, actually create the work themselves. Occasionally, they can have an overall concept for the artwork, but they might sub-contract some of the treatments or technical aspects to other specialists. Sorey's artworks are all fabricated by his own hand. He writes software that helps him design and -build complex curvilinear structures out of sheet materials. He designs and builds digital electronics for artwork with kinetic or interactive components.

Sorey enjoys working with many materials and processes, and often finds innovative ways to apply them to his ideas. Like the alchemists, he regards each material as having inherent physical, chemical, and spiritual qualities that he explores through his work.

Some of Sorey's exciting work includes:

- "Salmon Waves" at the Ballard Locks. These are large scale stainless steel wave shapes reflecting the water environment of the locks while also evoking other natural shapes such as sea shells, fern fronds, octopus arms, whale fins, and sea monsters. Visible only at night, smolt salmon images, created by controlled LED lights, swim among the steel waves surprising the viewers who wonder by after dark.
- "Justice Garden Path" at the Regional Justice Center in Kent, Washington was a collaborative work with artist Lorna Jordan. The artwork design, praised for its artistic strength and social function as a public space, is carried out in a classical style to complement the architecture. The artwork includes braided paths and plazas representing the justice system's balance of the spirit of freedom with regulation of human interaction, a healing garden for stressed workers and visitors, and a pleasing pattern to view from the upper stories of the building.
- "Flock" is a kinetic environmental sculpture designed originally for the old Henry Art Gallery at the U of W. Inspired by groups of birds turning in unison while in flight, the work involves two hundred "choreographed" paper panel flaps that move with a breeze. The panel is now on permanent display at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle.

You may visit Paul Sorey's website at <http://psorey.home.comcast.net>.

The public art component of the Lake City Way Multi Modal Project is administered by the City's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs and supported by Seattle Department of Transportation 1% for Art funds. Learn more about the Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs at <http://www.seattle.gov/arts>.